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Wildwood Homes

Being a collection of houses
and details with suggestions
for the home builder

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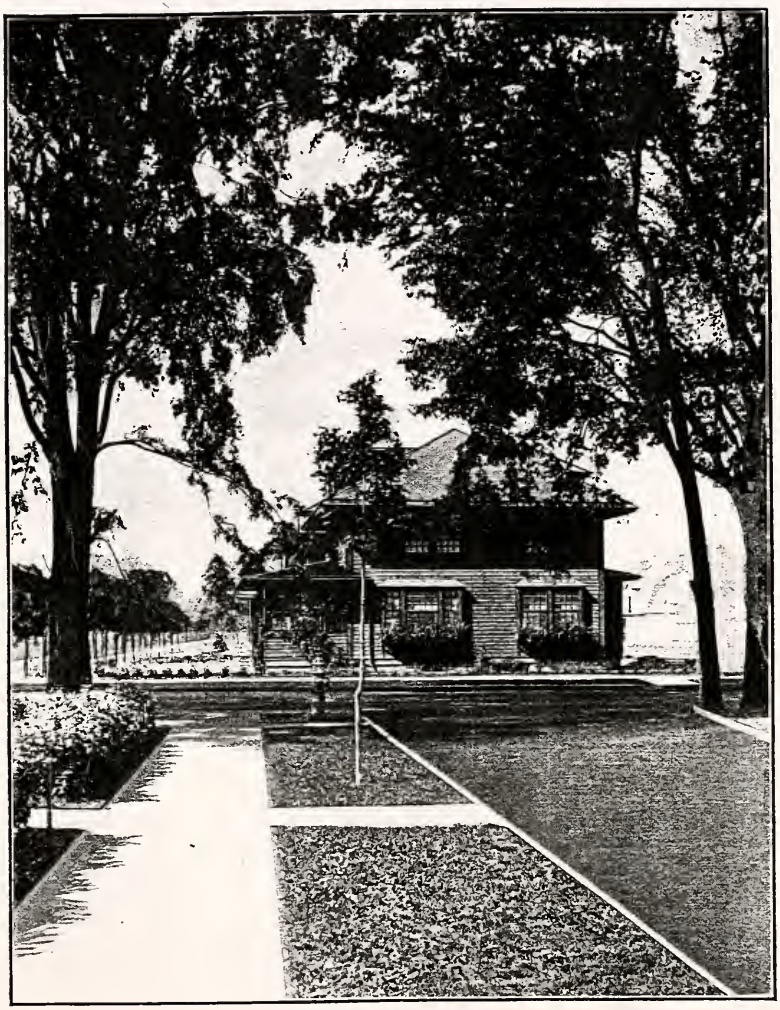

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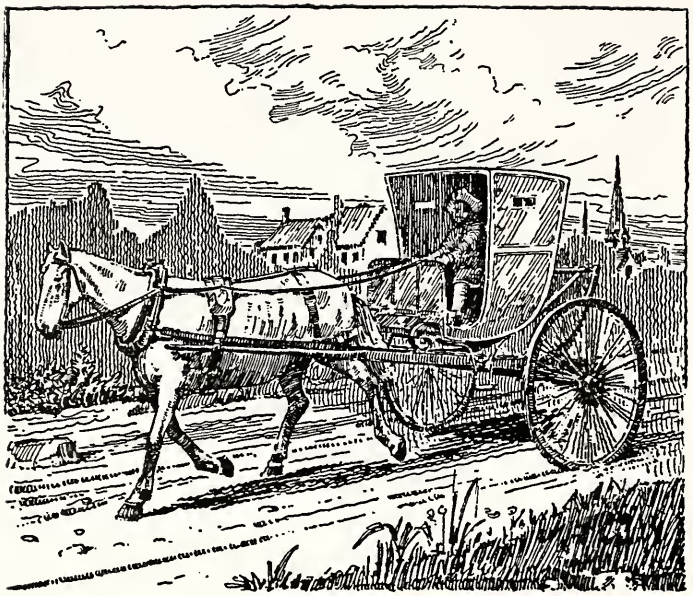
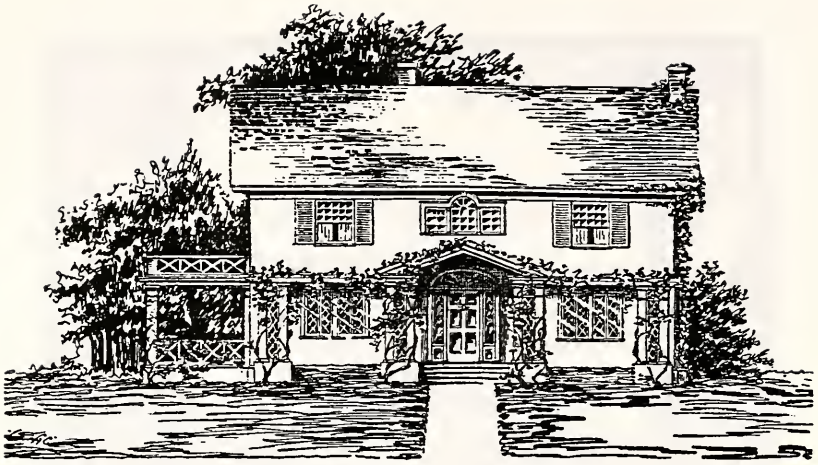
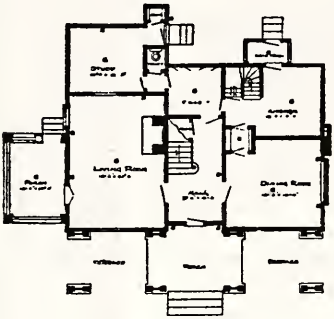


Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day?—
* * * * *
Logic is logic. That's all I say.

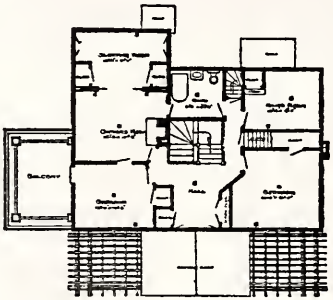
THE HOUSE DURABLE

For fifty years and more in this country of ours we have been building things destined if not deliberately designed to break down and not wear out. It is the age of passing fancies and of fleeting fashions. All the rage today they are a joke tomorrow. Milady's hat of yesteryear may be as good today as when it came forth at Eastertide a milliner's creation, yet should she wear on the street —well, she wouldn't do it, so why discuss the impossible? Our material prosperity, we will not say the newness of our arrival, has encouraged indulgence in vagaries, conceits, and vanities. The wealthy vie as did the ancient Athenians in producing "some new thing" and no sooner is it the vogue than it is discarded as the toy of which the child has tired. Each year sees something new in the fashions of dress, jewelry, furniture and architecture, and, mark it well, the only fashions that endure are those based on the models that obtained before the age of fashion—those "dear old things" whose beauty is their simplicity and whose art is their artlessness. Now the tendency of





FIRST FLOOR PLAN

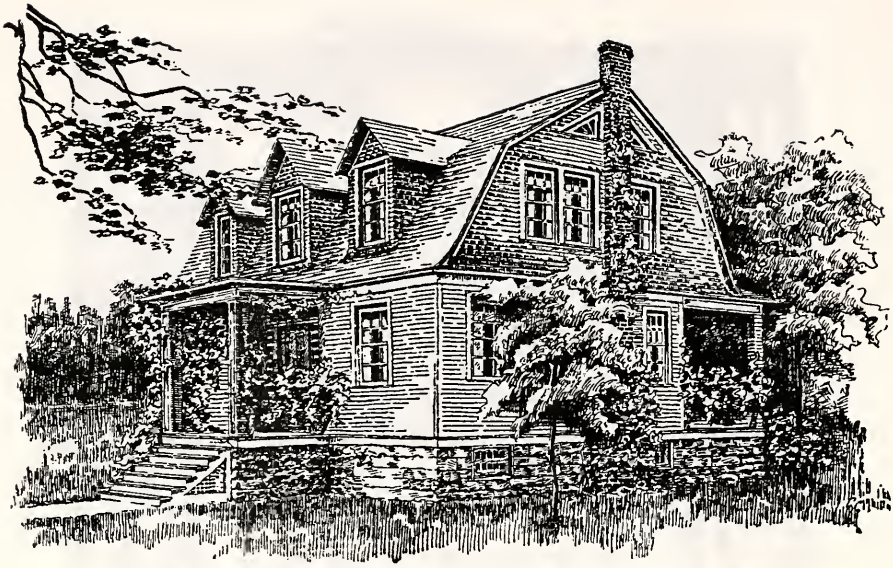


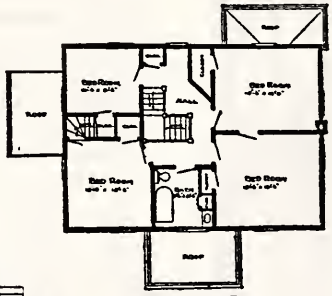
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

our time not only makes for prodigality and wastefulness but it sacrifices that which is truly meritorious to that which is novel, that which is enduring to that which is ephemeral. The man of average fortune is kept panting to maintain a pace that is a killing pace and which leads merely to the vulgar and barbaric. Indeed, the great need of the day is a return to that which is enduring, sane living, sane thinking, and sane fashion, fashions that are always in fashion because they are fundamentally and essentially correct and in good taste. The enduring makes not only for economy but it imparts to us the spirit and the understanding of that which is the best and the most beautiful.

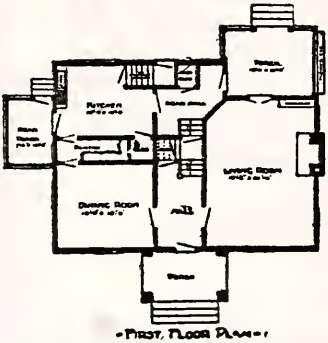
Dr. Holmes in his masterly story of "The One Hoss Shay" with quaint humor pointed out the rule that the wise will follow, the rule of leaving no weak places in our work. No chain is stronger than its weakest link and the Deacon who constructed the "One Hoss Shay" realized

"That the weakest place must stan' the strain
'N' the way to fix it uz I maintain
Iz only jest





- Second Floor Plan -



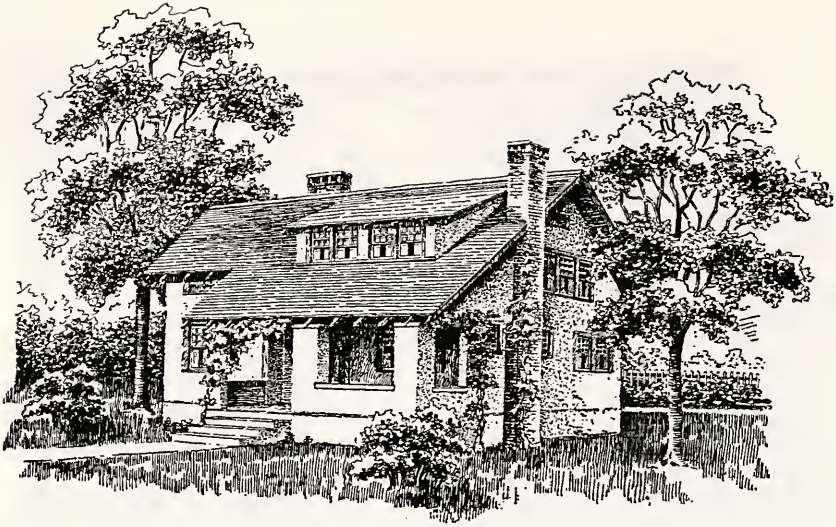
- First Floor Plan -

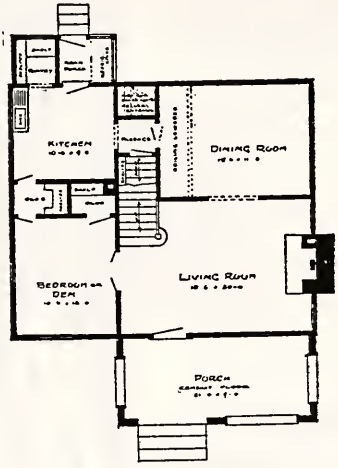
"T' make that place as strong as the rest."

And we all remember how he collected his materials; the strongest oak, the lancewood and ash from the straightest trees, steel of the finest, bright and blue, and the leather, that tough old hide that was found in the pit when the tanner died. And we remember as well how he put all these materials together so carefully, so painstakingly, and so scientifically that when that vehicle had run a hundred years to a day there was no bit of local trouble.

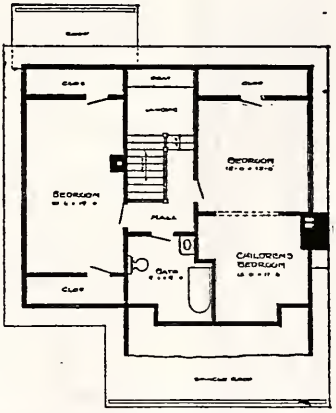
"There couldn't be, for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part,
That there wasn't a chance for one to start;
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels were just as strong as the floor,
And the whippletree neither less nor more,
And the back cross-bar as strong as the fore,
And spring, and axle, and hub encore."

That was a model "Shay" that the Deacon built, and Dr. Holmes

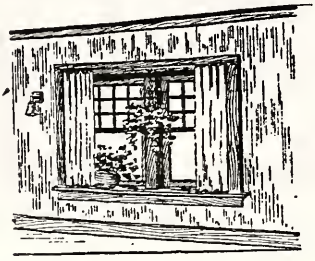




"FIRST FLOOR PLAN"



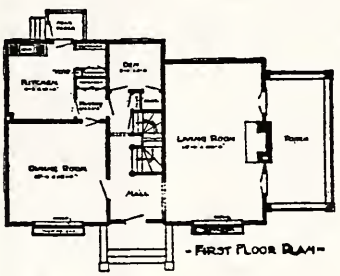
"SECOND FLOOR PLAN"



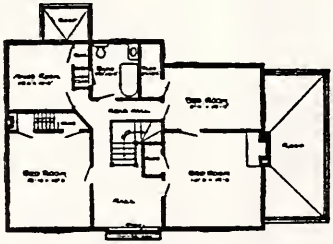
in immortalizing its construction and its history has set before us the proper plan for procedure not only in the building of "Shays" but for the building of anything else.

And to nothing is this rule more appropriate and applicable than in the building of homes, for it is given to the average American to build not more than one home in a life time. Yet this average American is forever beset, consumed, pestered, obsessed, and inspired by the ambition to build. It is a thing he wants and he won't be happy till he gets it. And, unless he has wisely counseled and well, he won't be then. For building a house is an undertaking not to be entered into lightly. The determination, the persistence, the patience, and above all the knowledge of the builder of the "Shay" are necessary to the attainment of the end desired. To the uninitiated the labor is beset by pit-falls, and when it seems that nothing has been left undone to produce the house durable some fatal defect is disclosed to mar the pleasure of possession.

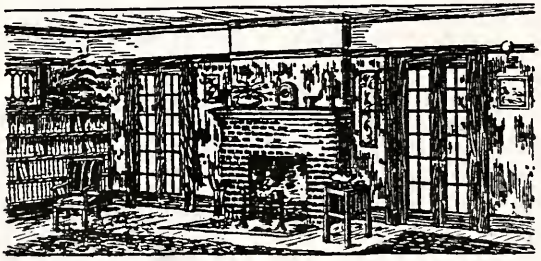
For example, has it ever occurred to you that the very best



- First Floor Plan -

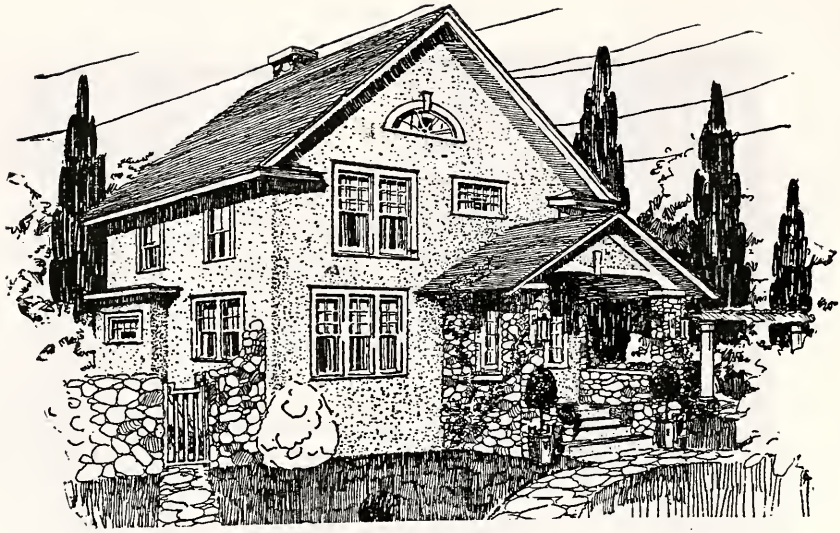


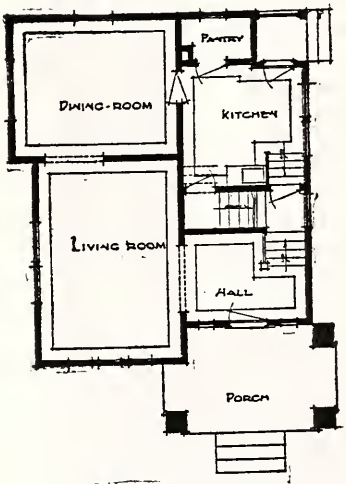
- Second Floor Plan -



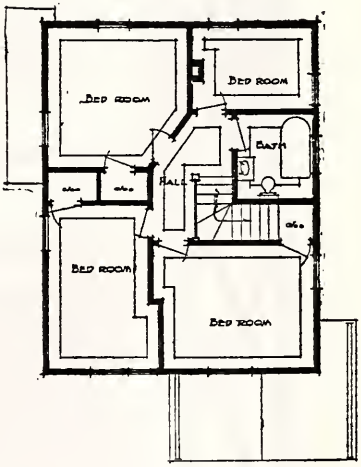
- South Side of Living Room. -

materials in the whole world may be put together conscientiously by the most skilled workmen and the result be far short of a house durable? Oh yes, it may stand there through the years as unchanged and unchanging as the Druid altars at Stonehenge. It physically may be impervious to the tooth of time and razure of oblivion; but none the less it may be a different house to you after a short period of occupancy. The pleasure that was yours at the beginning is lost, and losing it, you find that you did not build durably. The wheels of its carpentry are just as strong as the thills of its masonry, and the floor of its plumbing as the sills of its tinning, while the panels of its heating and ventilating are as strong as any other part. And yet it has broken down rather than worn out. In an evil hour, and may it be forever accursed, you adopted some architectural fad or fashion of the day and as a consequence all the excellent carpentry, fine masonry, and splendid plumbing came to naught. The weakest part hasn't stood the strain which the change of fashions and your own development in ideas have placed upon it. It



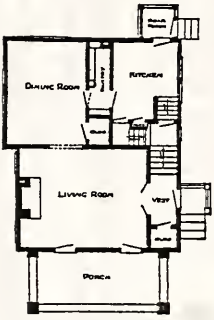


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

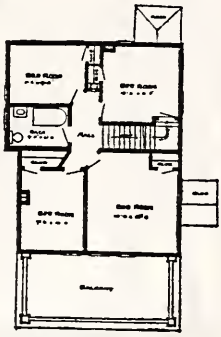


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

has broken down. Step into this fine old sepulcher of departed architectural fashion which the Sourface family reluctantly acknowledge as home and you will better understand perhaps. Nothing the matter here with wheels of the carpentry, the thills of the masonry, the floor of the plumbing, or the sills of the heating and ventilation. As good as the day they were placed twenty years ago. Ah, but here we have it! Here's the broken whippletree of a gingerbread slate mantle, and there is the snapped crossbar of a scroll worked doorway. Over yonder's the crumbling hub of a sprawling bow-window and up on the top is the smashed axle of a cupola or fancy cornice. The sleek and shining finish of the woodwork, carved to catch the most possible dust and kill the most possible women cleaning it, is the broken spring, and altogether it smacks of the day when it was considered artistic and aesthetic to hang the walls with landscapes painted inside gilded and plush framed wooden chopping bowls, and quite the thing to stick on the backs of chairs of the parlor suite, throws of fine netting filled with that cottony



-First Floor Plan-

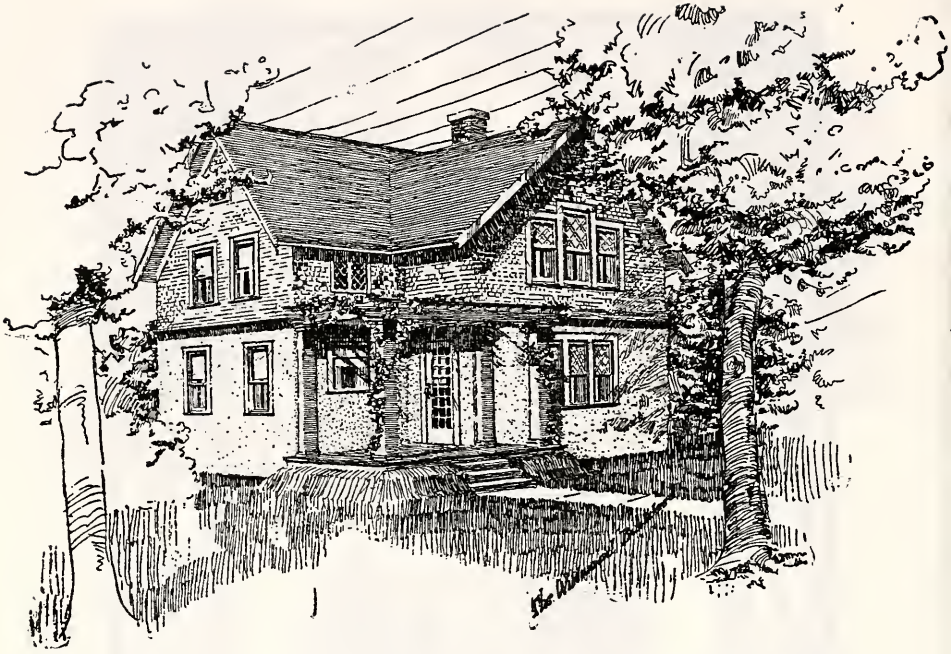


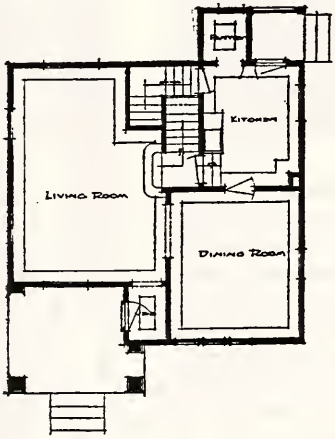
-Second Floor Plan-

stuff from the milkweed pods. The Sourfaces can give the landscapes to the washerwoman on Christmas and put the milkweed throws in the Missionary barrel; but, by heck, they can't eliminate the bow-window, the cupola, the slate mantle, the grill work, and all the other atrocities that, once the pride of their hearts, now hang on like the albatross that is the badge of shame. They fell for a fad and the fad has the spurs in them.

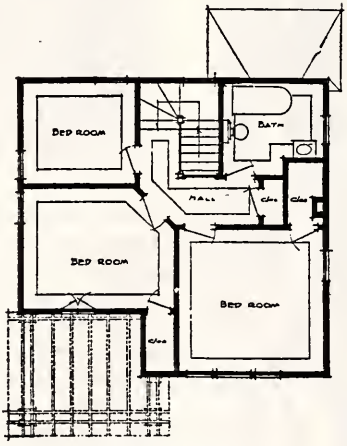
Yet the house durable is not an impossibility. Indeed it is a living fact and not only one of our day, but our father's, our grandfather's, and our great grandfather's days. Who of us may not recall a home or a dozen homes we have known familiarly for years wherein there is nothing to jar or offend!

Built originally along lines that have stood the test of ages they still appeal and will appeal so long as brick and mortar and beam hang together. They were pleasing because of their strength and simplicity when they were erected twenty-five, fifty, or a hundred years ago, and as the truly beautiful and the really artistic know



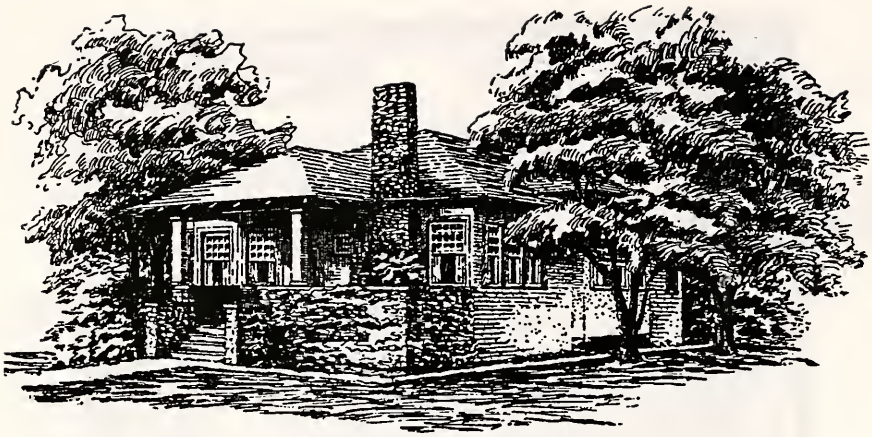


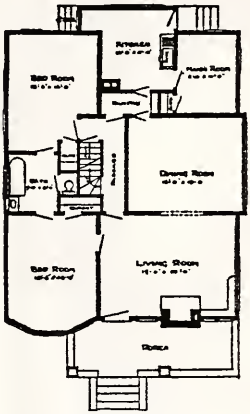
First Floor Plan



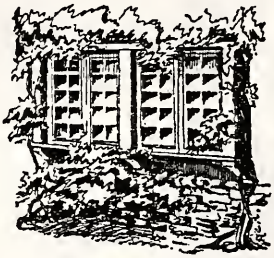
Second Floor Plan

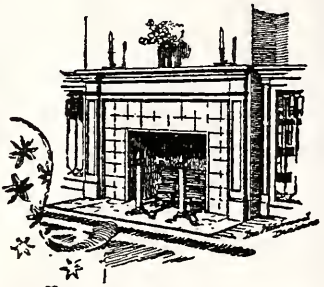
no change or shadow of turning they must so continue. Their architecture is of the enduring quality of their oak beams and of the granite on which they are reared. They are the houses durable that will stand against the winds and floods and rains of changing fashion. For they are founded upon the rock of good taste.

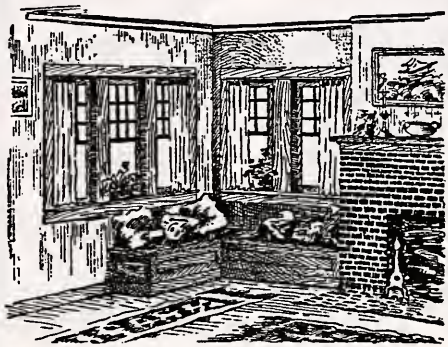




- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -



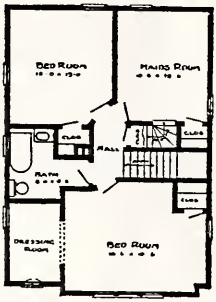




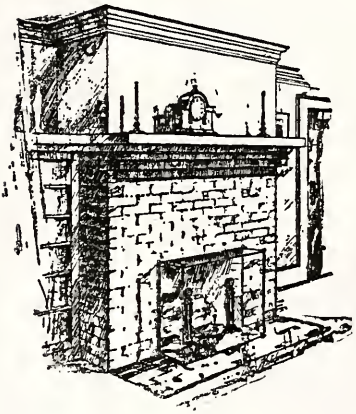
CORNER IN LIVING ROOM

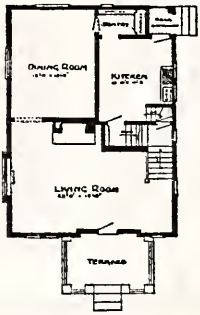
THE PASSING OF THE PARLOR

A local building company in its advertisement in the News today mentions the passing of the parlor from the plans of the modern house. To the incoming generation, which was never immersed in the odor of parlor sanctity, that may not mean much, but to those of us who are older it is redolent with memories grave and gay, the gaiety, alas, finding its genesis more in a latter-day appreciation of the grotesque than in joyous recollections of the happy past. For the parlor of the generation gone was not something to be entered into lightly. How through the mellow haze of



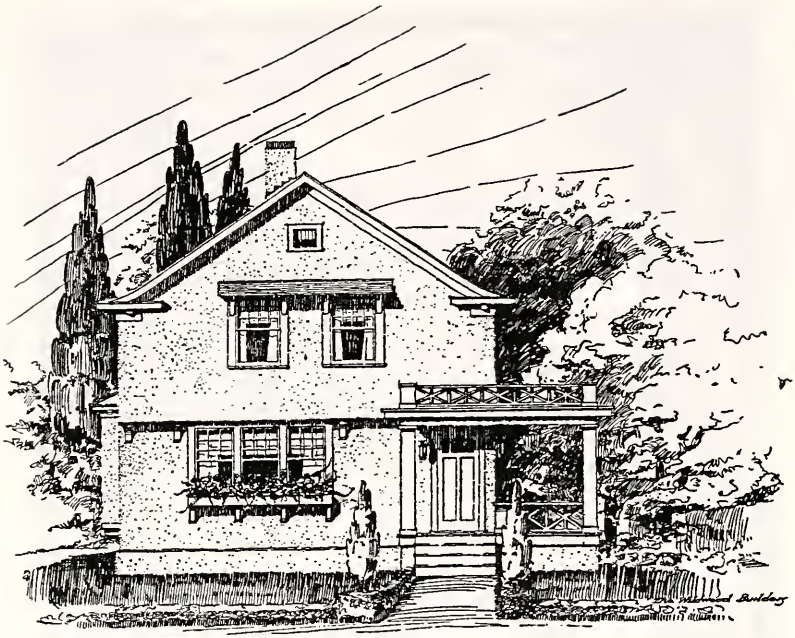
-SECOND FLOOR PLAN-

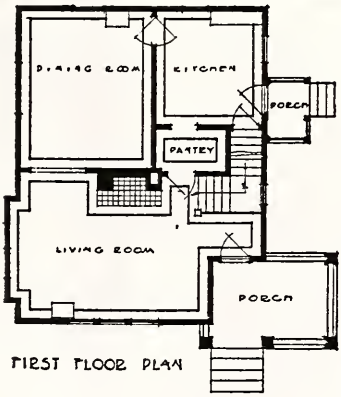




-FIRST FLOOR PLAN-

intervening years its appointments, every one a shrine, frame themselves slowly from that uncertainty with which time invests all things! And it is dim, too, today because it was never well lighted in the hey-day of its musty glory, its jealous guardians fearing that the intrusion of God's sunlight would fade the startling reds and greens of those impossibly mammoth flowers incident to the adornment of the Brussels carpet. The stiff haircloth furniture, six straight-backed, uncomfortable chairs, the Davenport, and the excruciating ottoman are arranged in deadly precision about the walls facing the marbletopped center table with the carved wooden dog squatting like a pagan idol on a sort of shelf between the table's heavy legs. The photograph album and fifty-pound family Bible with those gilt hasps, that seem designed to withhold the unsearchable riches from the unworthy, crown this inevitable center piece and give added solemnity to the environment. Upon the mantel-piece the three glass bells protect from the vulgar and polluting touch of such unfortunate flies as may chance to become imprisoned in this sanctu-





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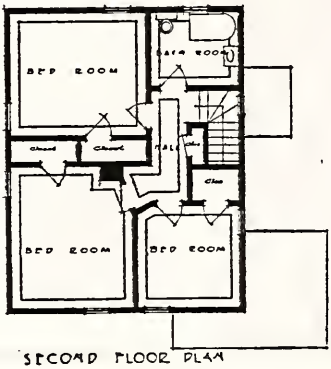
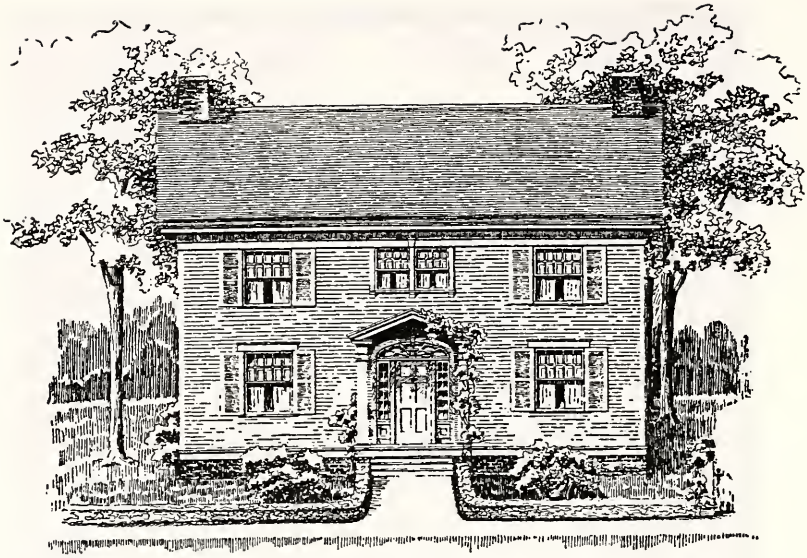
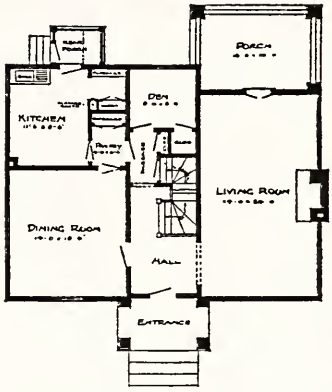


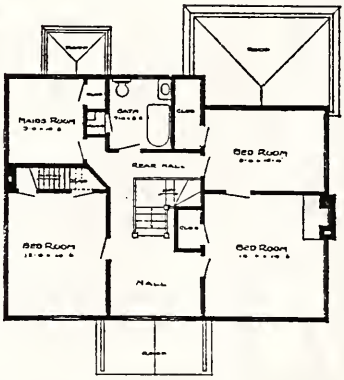
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ary the polished brass clock that grandpa bought in New York, a basket of artificial wax fruit of suspicious size, evenness and beauty of color, picked up by someone the Lord knows where, when or how, and finally under the third bell—crowning glory of the skillful handiwork and morbid creative faculty of lamented Aunt Eliza—a presentment of Rock of Ages, fashioned from the hair of all the relatives by blood and marriage, and collected by this excellent spinster at a family reunion. Microbes were then unknown and she plied her needle all unharmed and unafraid! And then the "what-not," crowded with pink shells from the sea in which the children fancied they could still hear the roaring of the waves; with atrocious china vases and bowls collected here and there; a startling red goblet bearing the legend in frosted letters, "Memento of the Centennial"; a photograph of General Grant somehow encrusted in a glass paper weight; a cannon ball from the blood-bought field of Gettysburg; Indian arrow-heads; gold quartz from the mine Uncle Ed went broke on; a petrified turtle, and a hundred other useless odds



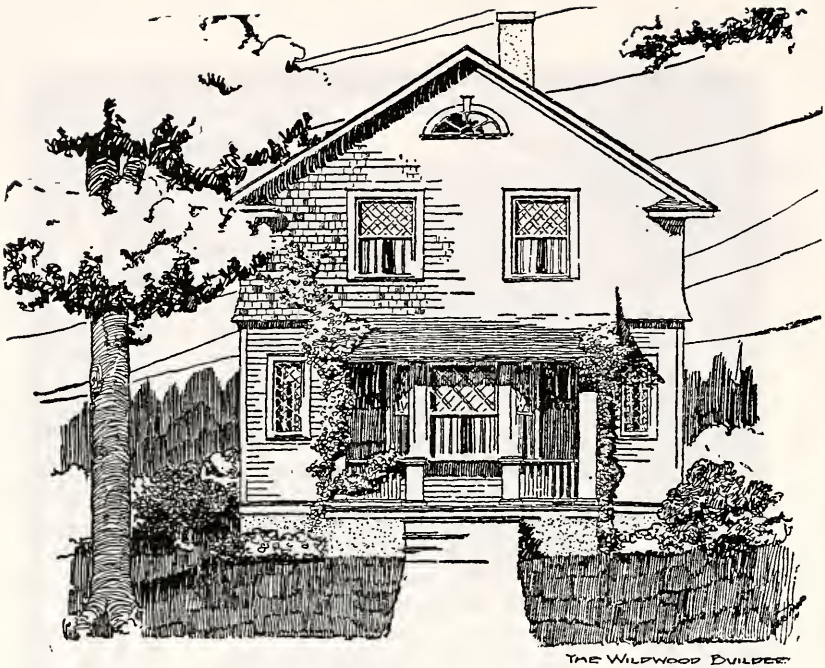


- First Floor Plan -

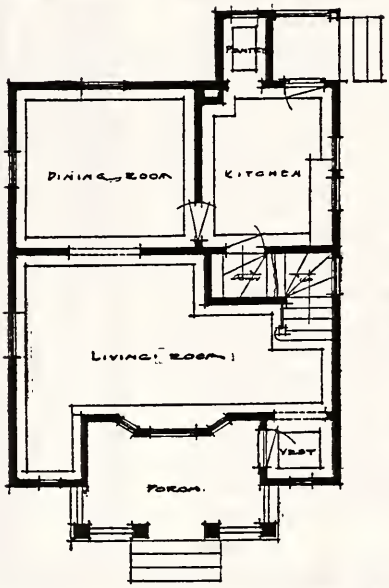


- Second Floor Plan -

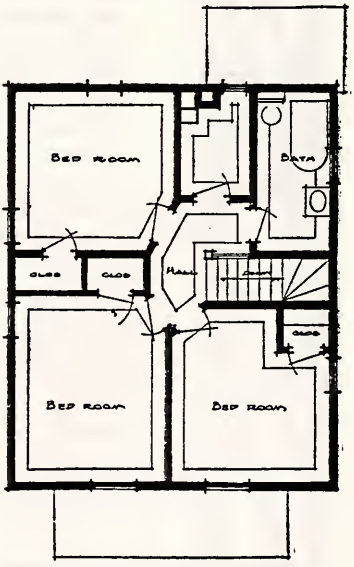
and ends garnered in laboriously through the weary years by the enterprising rubes and rubbernecks of the family. And the pictures Wide-Awake and Fast-Asleep in their jarring discords of color; Henry Clay in the senate; a steel engraving of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, not half bad, by the way; and a landscape in oil, which that long-nosed Cousin Sallie painted and gave mother one Christmas in exchange for a perfectly elegant silk bed quilt—a painting that thrust the steel of conviction into even your childish bosom that Cousin Sallie should have confined her artistic passion to barns and back fences. Oh that parlor! Its contents representing the value of all the rest of the stuff in the house and still only used on such state occasions as funerals and when the presiding elder came to stay on quarterly meeting days, at which times we were all herded in there for "family worship" before breakfast, an invasion of this holy-of-holies necessitated by the presence there of the big Bible aforesaid, which, by the way, always ground its tell-tale coat of dust into the broad clothed knees of the good elder during his read-



THE WILDWOOD BUILDER

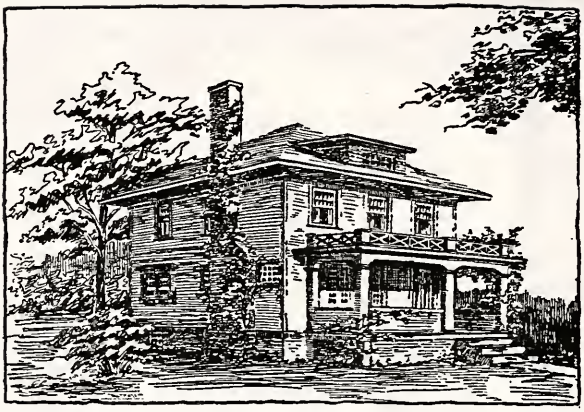


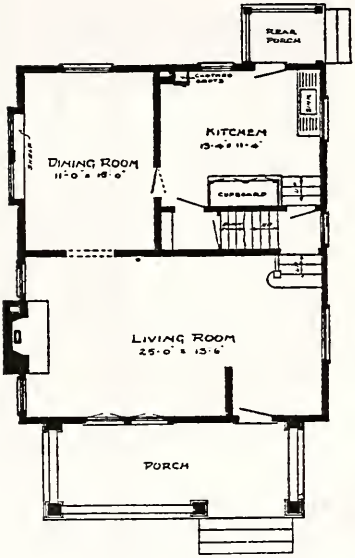
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

ing of some appropriate passage from Jeremiah or Job. The old-fashioned parlor! A place that was "too nice to use," and which yet represented an outlay that might easily have made the balance of the home more happy, more comfortable, and in retrospect today more lovely. Has it passed altogether? Not quite, perhaps, but thank God it is passing, and will soon be gone. For it is barbaric, and in nothing is it symbolic of the home we see through the moist eyes of loving memory. That home lives in the old-fashioned "sitting room" with its cheery open fire that sparkles and crackles even now, making bright the circle of happy faces about it—faces that fade to the Father-land only when we turn from the picture of the past to a consciousness of the now-time we had momentarily forgotten.





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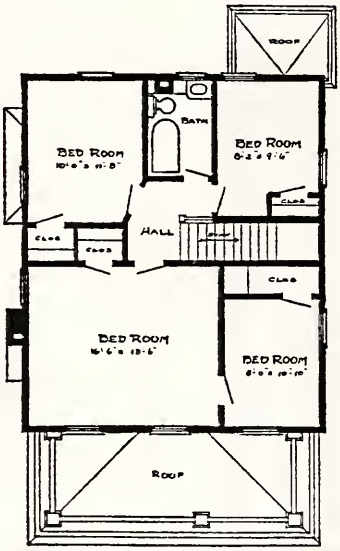
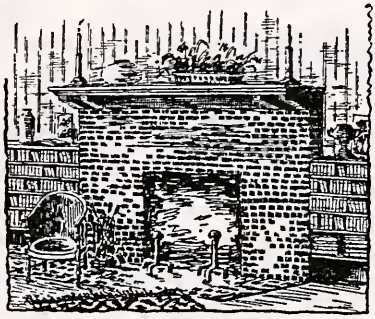


- Second Floor Plan -



What the Chimney Sang.

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
  And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Woman stopped, as her babe she tossed,
  And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tear-drops back she forced,
  "I hate the wind in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
  And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the children said, as they closer drew,
  "'Tis some witch that is cleaving the black night
    through!
'Tis a fairy trumpet that just then blew
  And we fear the wind in the chimney."

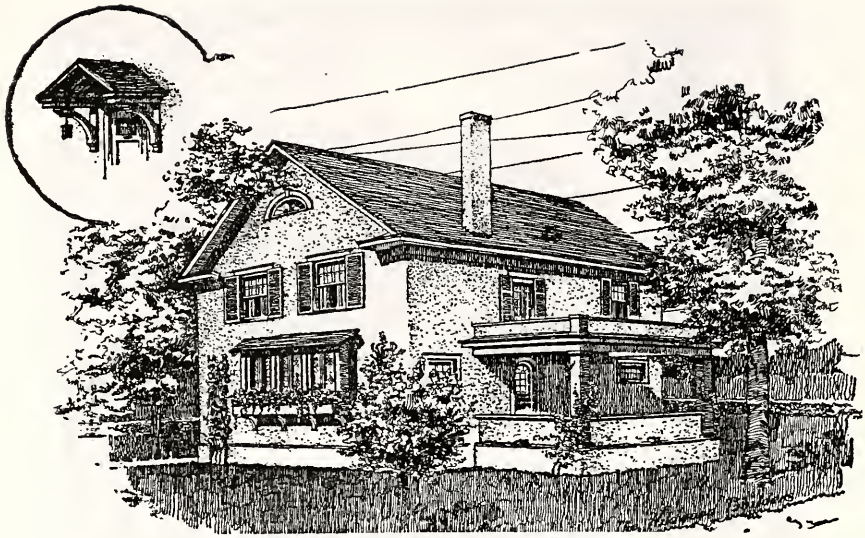
Over the chimney the night-wind sang
  And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the Man, as he sat on his hearth below,
  Said to himself, "It will surely snow,
And fuel is dear, and wages low,
  And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."

Over the chimney the night-wind sang
  And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the Poet listed and smiled, for he
  Was man, and woman, and child, all three,
And said: "It is God's own harmony,
  This wind we hear in the chimney."

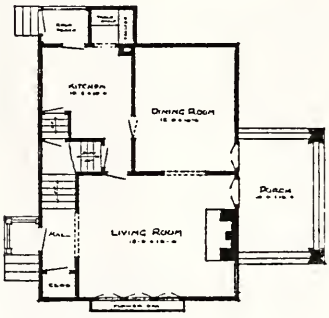
—BRET HARTE.

THE FIREPLACE.

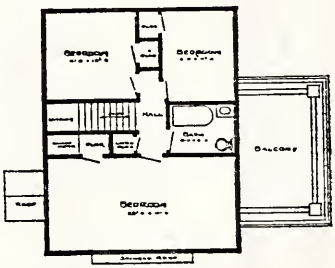
If you're getting on in years—along about that age when you begin to use hair tonic and pills, and to rub cold cream in your crow's feet—you can look back and recall how gladsomely the



Shawnee Place, Fort Wayne, Indiana



- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -



- SECOND FLOOR PLAN -

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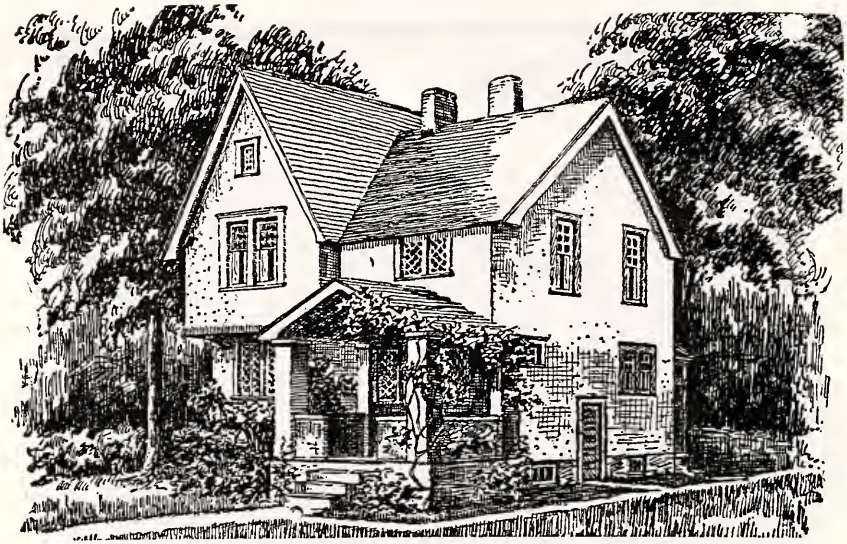
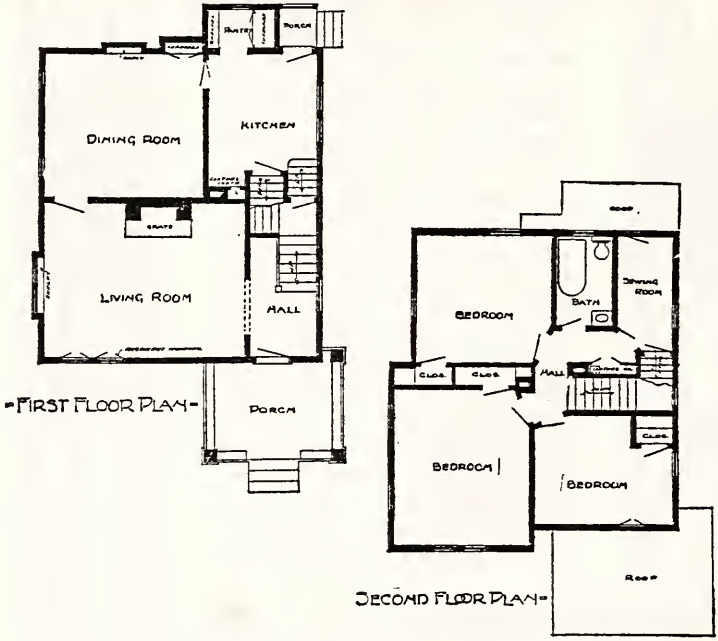
architects relegated the old fashioned fire place to oblivion. None of the new houses that were built were provided with fireplaces, for the era of the base burner had arrived. Undoubtedly the base burner heated the house better and its benickled ornamentation with its shining towers, and minarets appealed to the somewhat barbaric tastes of the day, so the fire place passed as an institution that had had its time. The old brass andirons were sent up to the attic along with granny's spinning wheel, the quaint old warming pan, the hair trunks, the four poster bed, and a lot of other junk that was considered of no earthly use and yet too good to throw away. The fireplace was gone and apparently gone forever. Indeed, when the furnace supplanted the base burner, as it shortly did, the fire place was made to appear as thoroughly among the things of a by-gone day as the old fashioned castor and the feather-bed. Moreover, everyone was glad of it for the furnaces heated the houses perfectly and then besides, the fireplaces had been no end of a bother. The wood had to be carried in, the kindling split up,



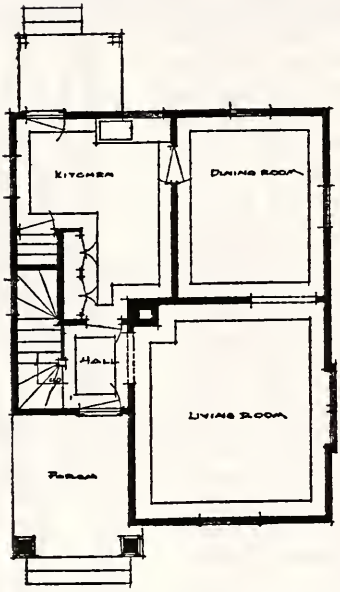


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

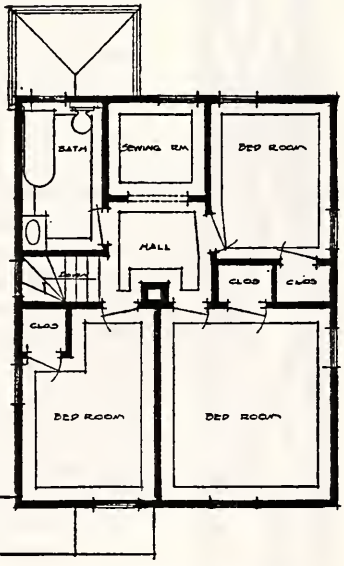
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

the ashes taken out, the andirons polished, the hearth swept, and a half dozen other things done, and after all, the only boon this trouble brought was the doubtful privilege of being roasted in front while you froze behind. So reasoned the average householder, and no new house had a fireplace up stairs, down stairs, or in my lady's chamber. To be sure, occasionally, a dinky little grate was installed, or one of those truly atrocious gas logs, but these were mere excuses for the perpetration of fancy mantles with multitudes of beveled glass mirrors and wooden gingerbread. They weren't installed to use at all—merely to look at and inspire the envy and wonder of the admiring yaps. The fireplace was a thing of yesterday and enshrined in momory along with the moving cradle, the stage coach, the Dutch oven, and several other institutions that were all very well in their day, but without part or parcel in the new age of progress and improvement. Yes, the fireplace was a back number. Everybody said so and assuredly everybody ought to know. Vox populi, Vox Dei—

Yet, today the old-fashioned



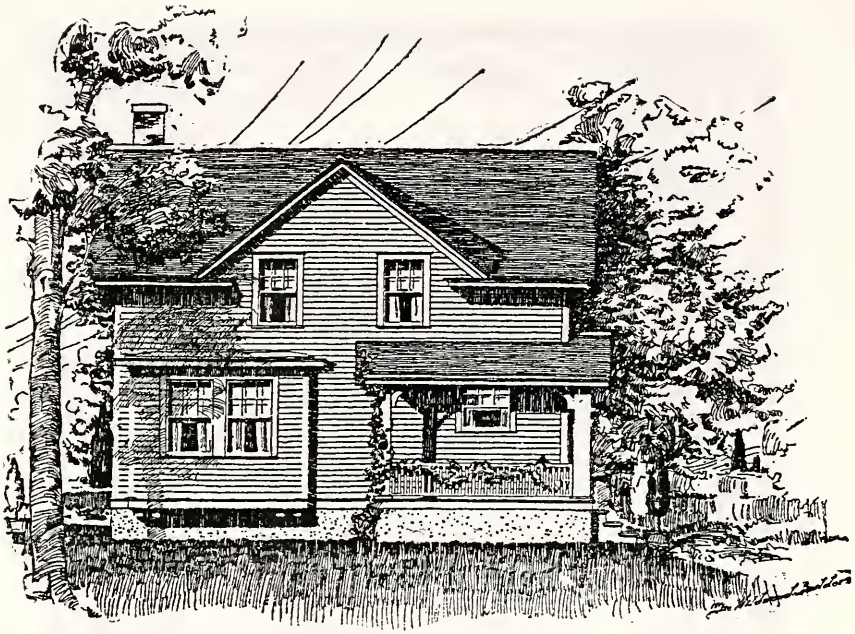
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

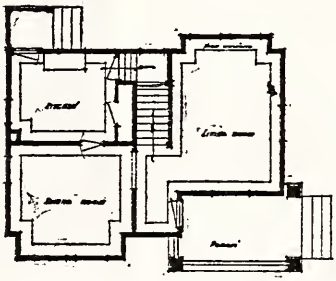


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

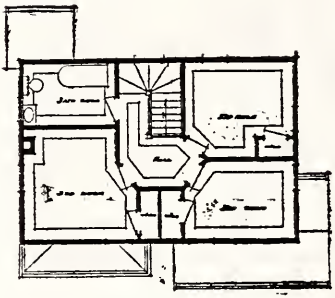
fireplace is coming back again and practically every modern house that is built gives space for it as for an honored altar. It is back again and that too despite the fact that it serves no practical purpose in an all too practical age. It adds nothing to the heating of the home, and the firewood it consumes, almost might be denominated an extravagance. In fact, the fireplace today can be regarded only as a luxury, yet mind you, it is a luxury apart. It ministers neither to gross appetite, vanity, nor passion, and in a large and liberal sense, may be said to partake of the luxury of giving, even that giving to the poor which is lending to the Lord.

For the fireplace of today is our concession to the family circle —our demand for its preservation, our protest against its evanishment. It is, if you please, a salaam to sentiment. For in all times from the open fire has sprung the welding flame that bound the family about it in an indissoluble union. It has been the genius of the family circle. No one ever thought of such a thing as a family circle about a steam radiator or a hot air register, and you can take it from high author-





First Floor Plan

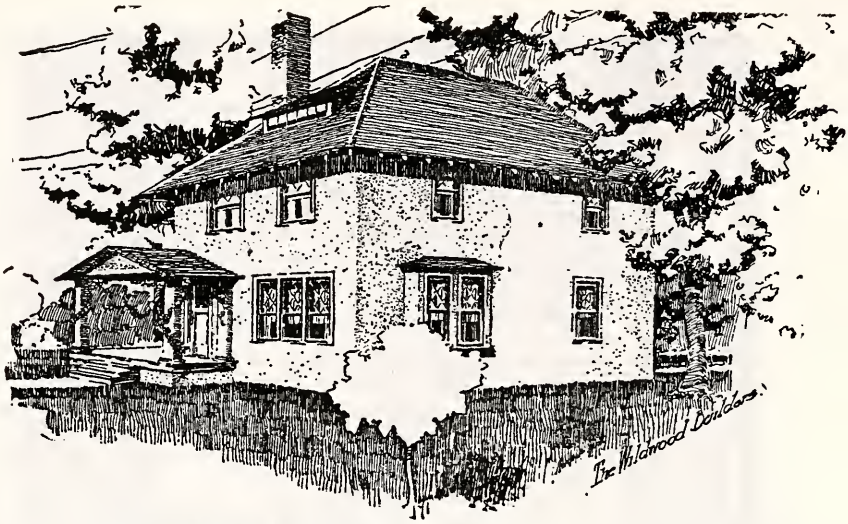


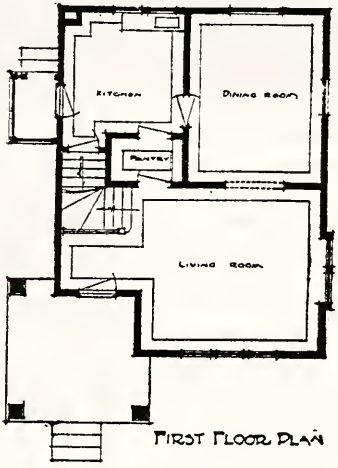
Second Floor Plan

ity that when Marco Bozzaris, "Cheering on his band," exhorted his men to "strike for their altars and their fires," he didn't have in mind a Michigan Base Burner or a sheet iron stove.

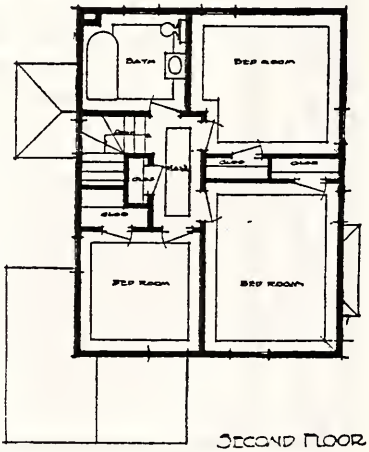
Those death-shots falling thick and fast, were directed by patriots who had fire places and who, as they battled, saw as by the yule log's flickering flames, the faces of all those loved and dear.

In all ages and all climes the open fire has served as the comforter and companion of man. David, the Poet King, sat musing while the fire burned and to the harmony of the winds he wedded the deathless eloquence of the Psalms. The great Alfred before the blazing hearth of the humble cotter, mapped out his victorious campaign, the serried flames unfolding to his prophetic vision the moving armies of an immortal conquest. By the blazing camp fires of Israel's happy host, maid Miriam sang her song of deliverance on the banks of the Red Sea, and in a later day and newer world, the jubilant bon-fires at Appomattox lighted up the night's repose, heralding the birth of a new freedom and the death of an ancient wrong.





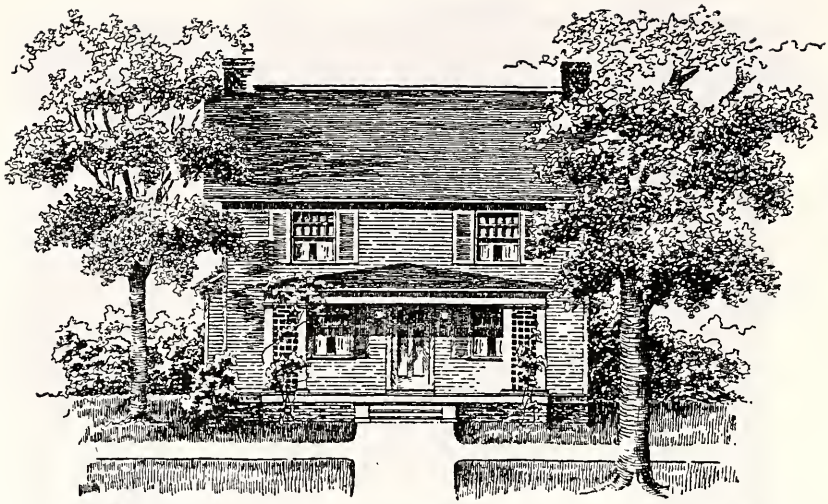
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

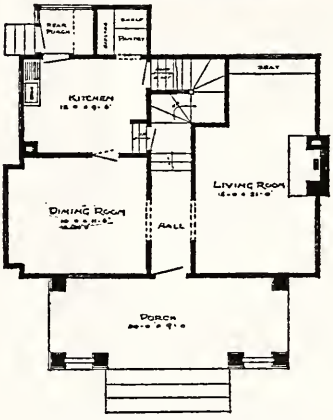


SECOND FLOOR

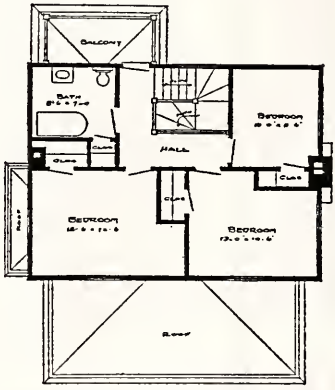
Yet in the sacred privacy of the home the open fire has served its noblest purpose and sanctified its sweetest sentiment. Before the fireplace piled high with blazing logs, the family circle becomes the family circle in very truth and fact. All barriers are burned away by its cordial warmth, and hearts and minds lie bare. And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know. The fireplace becomes the family confessional, and in the light of its inspiring flame, we confide our hopes, our fears, our loves. Mother, father and children then become these entities, in fact as in name, and the tie of home and family is tempered and hardened by the glowing embers that cast their gentle radiance out, making warm and glad our hearts.

And then those pictures in the fire that are presented in the sweet silences about the hearth—Silences that are none the less communion! In the lazy flames that slowly dance and flicker, yearning boyhood sees portrayed the triumphs and achievements of the years to come; the matured man, the paradise of a vanished past. The maiden, gazing through the veil of shifting flames, sees com-





- FIRST FLOOR PLAN -



- SECOND FLOOR PLAN -

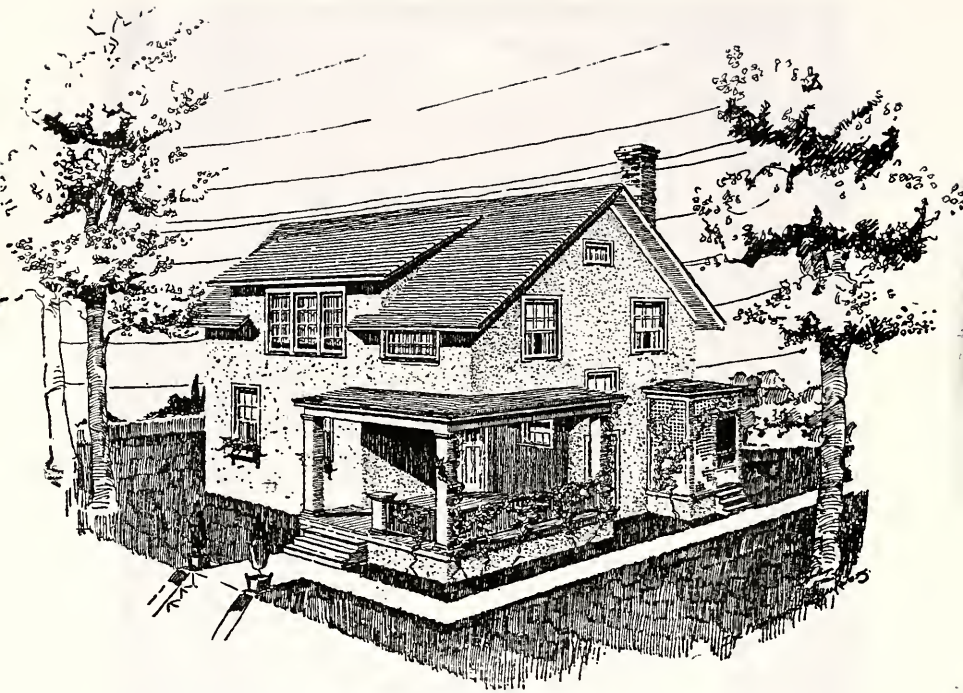
ing to her warm embraces the hero of her dreams, while the granddame half nodding in the chimney corner, with wistful sadness beholds in quiet rapture the lost lover of a youth that is gone, now beckoning her to a near and never ending reunion.

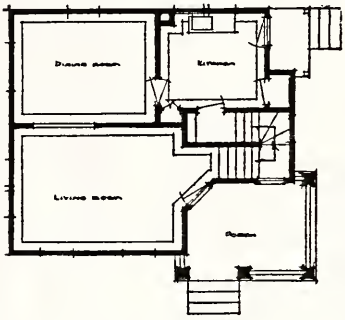
The sparks fly upward as new wood is cast upon the groaning andirons, and the spell is snapped, for only in the log that is a living coal, are real pictures seen.

Yes, the family circle has ever found its finest expression about the open fire place. It was so in the remote past.

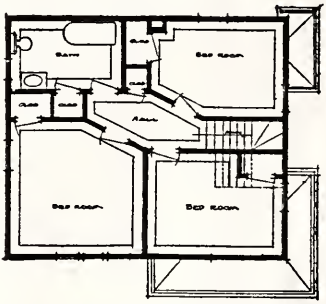
"When round the lonely cottage
Roared loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roared louder yet within."

And it is so today, when wood costs eight dollars a cord and you know that the honest husbandman who sells it to you has inadvertently worked in entirely too much gum and poplar as genuine hickory and sugar. The fireplace is back and it's back to stay, and while the most of us cannot afford it as a daily luxury, we can light it as the oils and incense are lighted on the altars of our worship. It can be lighted on Sun-





First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

day, and birthdays and holidays, and state occasions generally, and in the grateful benediction of its ruddy glow, it follows as the night the day that the family must assemble in a communion that is near and dear.

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